

FUELS RANKING

The various fuels found in the San Mateo & Santa Cruz Unit are categorized into models each of which has specific burning characteristics. These models along with slope class, ladder fuel, crown closure component, and difficulty of control rating was used to derive the fuel hazard ranking for each Quad 81st.

For the purpose of ranking potential impacts for a given Asset At Risk (AAR), a common statewide geographic unit was developed. Using the USGS 7.5 topographical quadrant map, each quad map was divided into grid cells, about 450 acres each. Each map yields 81 cells; thus in the fire planning process the term Quad 81st is applied.

The fuels in the Unit have been ranked Very High, High, and Moderate. A fine-grained portrayal of surface fuel conditions was developed using the most recent and up to date vegetation and structure information. Commencing in April 2004, Unit vegetation coverage data began to be updated on a statewide basis. San Mateo & Santa Cruz Unit's vegetation data layer is nearing completion. A second map layer is added to reflect surface fuel changes caused by recent fires and subsequent re-growth. This can help portray expected post-wildfire fuel conditions based on the pre-fire fuel vegetation layer and elapsed time since a fire occurred. Ladder and crown fuels are determined by the relative abundance of fuels. Values range from "absent or lacking fuels" to "present but spatially limited" then to "widespread". The higher value implies a greater probability that torching and crown fires would occur if the stand were subjected to a wildfire under severe fire weather conditions. The result information is the basis of the following Unit Vegetation Map.

FUEL LOADING - VEGETATION

